

# 50 Years of Dibrugarh University

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**No public institution in our state has** safely and smoothly come into existence and neither is it roses all the way for ever afterwards. The usual history is struggle all the way and all barriers sinking before determined public will. The gold of the golden jubilee of Dibrugarh University has been hard earned by its founders, teachers, students and the people who have rallied around it to see it grow from strength to strength.

Dibrugarh University, the hub of higher education in upper Assam, has completed fifty years. It is a special anniversary and all those who belong to this University have reasons to feel great happiness and triumph. This is also an occasion for taking stock of things. What has the University achieved so far? Has it been able to fulfil the expectations of the people? An assessment of the achievements may help the University to work out the future line of action. It can

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legitimately be hoped that this subject on its own merit would invite discussions of the Assamese intelligentsia during the golden jubilee year.

Dibrugarh University was established seventeen years after the first University of Assam. July 1, 1965 was the foundation day of the University. The University was established with an objective of building it as a centre of science and technology. Before the town of Dibrugarh was selected as a site for the University, the town of Jorhat was also a claimant. The government of Assam decided to establish the University at Dibrugarh because of the initiative taken by the then Education Minister Mr. Devakanta Baruah, Dr. Birinchikumar Baruah, Dr. Lakshmiprasad Dutta, Rai Saheb Hanuman Box Kanoi, Dr. N.K Bosu, A.K. Borkakaty and a few others. The Education Minister got the Dibrugarh University Act 1965 passed by the Legislative Assembly and the University started functioning from July 1 that year. The academic journey of the University began in the building of Kanoi Commerce College from 1966.

As the University was planned as a centre of higher education of science

and technology, Dr. B. R. Seth, an eminent mathematician of the IIT, Kharagpur, was appointed as the first Vice-chancellor at the initiative of the Education Minister, Mr. Devakanta Baruah. Dr. Seth joined as the Vice-chancellor on July 19, 1966. Dr. L.P. Dutta who had been appointed the Rector of the University, discharged the functions of the Vice-chancellor till Dr. Seth assumed office. Dr. L.P. Dutta played a crucial role in establishing the University and giving it a shape at the beginning.

At the initiative of the then Deputy Commissioner of Dibrugarh, Mr. Golokeswar Baruah search for a plot of land was made at several places in and around Dibrugarh. A suitable plot was found near Boiragimoth but the plot could not be acquisitioned because the land was cropland and protest came from local people. Later on, the University authority purchased for rupees seventeen lakhs 1500 bighas of land along with the tea garden at Rajabheta from the family of the late Malbhog Baruah, a leading Assamese tea planter. On May 15, 1967, the central Education Minister, Mr. Triguna Sen laid the foundation stone of the University campus and the construction of the tea-garden turned University followed.

The science Department, opened at the University in the first five years were Mathematics (1967), Physics (1967), Statistics (1967), Chemistry (1968), Petroleum Technology (1969), and Applied Geology (1970). The Department of Life Sciences and the Department of Pharmaceutical Science were started later on in 1977 and 1983 respectively. In the Humanities Stream, the Departments opened in the first five years were Assamese (1966), Anthropology (1966), Economics (1967), English (1967), History (1967), Political Science (1967) and Sociology (1967). The University started at the beginning an Institute of Education and

an undergraduate law course. The Institute of Education became the Department of Education in 1968 and the law course was discontinued a few years after. The Department of Commerce was started in 1978. Currently, the University has seventeen full-fledged Departments and nineteen centres for study. These centres for study are Atmospheric Studies, Behavioural Sciences, Bioinformatics Studies, Studies in Biotechnology, Computer Studies, Studies in Geography, Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication, Juridical Studies, Studies in Languages, Library and Information Science Studies,

*A snapshot of the first convocation of Dibrugarh University.*



Photo: Courtesy Publication Division, Dibrugarh University

Management Studies, Nano Science and Composite Materials, Studies in Performing Arts, Studies in Philosophy, Studies in Physical Education and Sports, Studies in Rural Development, Studies in Social Work, Tea and Agro Studies and Women's Studies. The Departments have M.A, M.Sc, M.Phil and Ph.D programmes. These three programmes are there in a few centres for study and the others offer Certificate and Diploma courses.

Dibrugarh University was expected at the beginning to put its thrust on higher education and research in science and technology and the fifty years of the University must have vindicated the expectations of the people. The opening of the Humanities Departments was initially resented by some people and the matter was discussed in the Assembly. However, a dispassionate observer today is likely to admit that teaching and research in the Humanities Departments was initially resented by some people and the matter was discussed in the Assembly. However a dispassionate observer today is likely to admit that teaching and research in the Humanities Departments have enabled the University to scale new heights.

Dibrugarh University started the Directorate of Distance Education in

2002. It has offered Post-graduate courses in Assamese, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, English, Commerce and Mathematics. It has also offered Diploma courses in Business Management, Journalism and Mass Communication and Computer Application. The Directorate has also arranged for Degree Courses in different subjects, and especially vocational subjects.

The University established the Engineering and Technology Institute in 2009. This institute has awarded B. Tech. Degrees to students in five subjects and these are Electronics and Communications, Computer Science and Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Civil Engineering.

Lakshminath Bezbaroa Central Library of the University was established in 1965. This library has been central to the academic activities of the University right from the beginning. The library was shifted to its present 33,570 square feet building area in 1985.

The University is connected with Internet. The Internet centre at the L.N. Bezbaroa Library controls the University Internet system. The Departments and the Centres for Study are connected with Internet.

There are a total of ten hostels in the University out of which five are for girls and five are for boys. The hostels can accommodate one thousand two hundred students. The hostel seat is allotted on merit basis. The ratio of boys and girls at the University is 40:60.

Dibrugarh University is situated at the eastern most part of the country. Because of the geo-strategically important location of the University, it may one day become an important centre for the study of culture, society and civilization of the South East Asia. Academic collaboration with Universities of South East Asia is already underway.

Once prowling tigers hunted stray animals in broad daylight in the area which has now become a place for teaching and research in rows of aesthetically satisfactory buildings. The tea garden houses and tea bushes have been replaced by class rooms, laboratories, libraries, study centres, administrative buildings, a branch of the SBI, a Post-office, hostels, guest houses, recreational parks, canteens, a market, auditoriums, playgrounds, an indoor stadium and quarters for teachers, officers and employees. Dibrugarh University has gone a long way in shaping the intellectual life of this region of the country and new vistas are ahead.□

*Nurul Hassan, Union Education Minister with J.N. Das, Vice Chancellor and D.H. Goswami, Registrar in a function at Dibrugarh University.*



Photo : Courtesy Prof. D.H. Goswami